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ENGLAND'S TITLE IN IRELAND.

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A LETTER ADDRESSED TO
HIS EXCELLENCY THE LORD
LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND.

BY

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LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE. MCMV

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JUN 21 1988

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England's Title in Ireland

I

MY LORD,—I address this letter to your Lordship because you represent the Government of England in Ireland. I do not think that you will take amiss what I have to say. Were you allowed you would, I believe, discharge the duties of your office in sympathy with the national aspirations of the people you have been sent to rule; to say less would be to impeach your character as a Governor with constitutional instincts. "All government," it has been well said, "without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery." You certainly do not desire to govern without the consent of the governed. Yet, in honest truth, you do so govern, if, indeed, it can be said that you govern at all. Your Excellency's position is an impossible one. You are a "constitutional ruler" in a country whose constitution has been destroyed. You represent a monarchy which rests on a Parliamentary title. But your office has survived Parliamentary institutions in Ireland. The English monarchy is the embodiment of English nationality; the Irish Viceroyalty is the very negation of Irish national sentiment. Were you the representative of an absolutist sovereign your position would be consistent, and might be strong. As

the representative of a constitutional king it is inconsistent and hopelessly weak.

An absolute ruler draws his strength from an oligarchy, but there is no oligarchy behind you. A constitutional sovereign draws his strength from the people, but the people are not behind you either. Forgive me, my Lord, but I cannot help saying it, the "Irish" Government—queerly so called—is the most grotesque thing on earth. There is nothing like it, to paraphrase the words of Sydney Smith, "in Europe, Asia, Africa, or Timbuctoo." Honest and intelligent English administrators who go to Dublin Castle find out the incongruities,—the impossibilities,—of "Irish" government sooner or later. They think that they are practically going from one part of England to another, but they ultimately discover that Ireland is a discontented English dependency of distinct national growth—not an English shire, bound to England by ties of race, religion, and history. This discovery sometimes does the administrator good.

"What made you a Home Ruler?" I asked the late Sir Robert Hamilton. He answered, "Soon after I went to Ireland a report was sent in from some district giving an account of an unsatisfactory state of things there. I really cannot recall the details. I was anxious not to act without further investigation. I said to the clerk, 'Who is the member for this district?' He gave me the name. I instructed the clerk to write to that member, asking if he would kindly call upon me to talk the matter over. 'Oh!' said the clerk, 'there will be no use in doing that; he would not come.' 'Why?' I asked. 'Oh!' he replied, 'no Irish members could come to the Castle; they would not have

anything to do with us.' I was amazed. What I had desired him to do was the ordinary thing in England. To ask a Member of Parliament to give you his views with reference to some statement affecting his constituents is the most natural thing in the world. In fact, it is a very helpful way of carrying on the administration. But I discovered that this way could not be employed in Ireland. Those responsible for the administration of the country could not communicate with those who represented the people of the country. Here was a wall built up between the Government and the governed. The thing struck me as absurd. I felt it could not last, and that something would have to be done to bring the Government into harmony with the popular wishes. Talk of the government of the people by the people for the people; no such government existed in Ireland."

A sympathetic "Irish" Secretary on one occasion invited a distinguished Irish Member to dinner at the Chief Secretary's Lodge, to have a private talk on a matter of urgent public importance. "You asked me to dine with you," replied the Irish Member, "at the Chief Secretary's Lodge. Where is the Chief Secretary's Lodge?" "I would lose my character," I once heard an Irish Member say in the House of Commons, "were I seen in the Castle Yard."

The King of England is above all parties. His health is drunk at public assemblies in England where men of all parties come together. It is a national toast. The Irish Viceroy is always a party man. His health is not drunk at national gatherings in Ireland. It is not a national toast. The health of the King of England himself is not drunk at national gatherings in Ireland. It is not a national

toast there. There is nothing personal in all this; far from it, so far as the present English sovereign is concerned, for men regard him as a ruler animated by just and humane sentiments in his dealings with nations. “. . . That the Irishman should not love the English . . .” says Robert Louis Stevenson, “is not disgraceful to the nature of man, rather, indeed, honourable, since it depends on wrongs ancient like the race, and not personal to him who cherishes the indignation.”

Why do we cherish the indignation? To answer this question I must ask another, perhaps even two questions: First, what is England's title in Ireland? Second, Does it rest on moral grounds? In answering these questions we shall get at the root of the whole subject; but I must beg your Lordship's indulgence, for I have to appeal to history, a tribunal from which English statesmen, in dealing with Ireland, shrink, but which I believe your Lordship has the courage and the sense of justice to face. “Politics,” says Professor Seely, “are vulgar when they are not liberalised by history.” The Irish politics of the English statesmen are not so liberalised. The occupants of the front benches in the House of Commons are present to my mind. There are scarcely three of them who could pass a respectable competitive examination in Irish history. I knew the late Mr. Gladstone. He devoted himself earnestly to the cause of Ireland in the latter years of his life, but he knew little of Irish history. He was frank, he was courageous; he would not deny the fact. He once said to me, “I am bound to say that I did not know as much about the way the Union was carried when I took up Home Rule as I came to

know afterwards. If I had known so much I would have been more earnest and extreme. The union with Ireland has no moral force. It has the force of law, no doubt, but it rests on no moral basis. That is the line which I should always take were I an Irishman. That is the line which, as an Englishman, I take now." And again he said, "You know we thought that the Irish question was settled (in 1870). There was the Church Act and the Land Act, and there was a time of peace and prosperity, and I frankly confess that we did not give as much attention to Ireland as we ought to have done."

Mr. Gladstone was the foremost Englishman of his age. He had entered the House of Commons in 1832. He must have heard the remarkable debates on Ireland which took place in 1833-34. He must have heard the equally remarkable debates which took place during the Melbourne Administration, 1835-41. He lived through the Repeal movement and the Tenant League Agitation of 1850-55. Yet he scarcely gave Ireland a thought until 1867-68. That a man of such just and generous instincts as Mr. Gladstone, filling responsible positions in the administration of public affairs, should have remained for all those years in ignorance of the urgency of the Irish question is a fact of extraordinary significance. Mr. Gladstone represented more faithfully than almost any man who has sat in the English Parliament since 1832 the current of practical thought in English legislation. That he should have deemed Ireland unworthy of his attention, for the best part of his public life, is the strongest proof we can have of the neglect—the criminal neglect—with which Ireland has been treated by the

responsible statesmen of England. I have before me a list of the Prime Ministers of England since 1832. There was hardly one of them who could have passed a successful competitive examination in Irish history. There were only two of them who, in any degree, possessed the confidence of the Irish people, or who tried strenuously to do anything for Ireland—Lord Melbourne (1835–41), who was kept in office by the Irish vote; and Mr. Gladstone, whose interest in Ireland was first awakened by the Fenian organisation, and re-awakened by the Land League, and who was placed in office by the Irish vote in 1866 and kept in office by the Irish vote from 1893 to 1894. I have also before me a list of the “Irish” Lord-Lieutenants and Chief Secretaries since 1832. There were in all some twenty-three Lord-Lieutenants; not one of them, of course, was a Catholic, for to this day any man professing the religion of the nation cannot be the governor of the nation. There were only three Irishmen—tame Irishmen, out of sympathy with the people. There were only two of the entire number who possessed the popular confidence—Lord Mulgrave (the choice of Lord Melbourne in 1835), and Lord Aberdeen (the Home Rule Lord-Lieutenant of 1886). Of some thirty Chief Secretaries, five only were Irish, tame Irish; none were Catholics. Two only possessed the confidence of the people—Lord Morpeth (the Melbourne Chief Secretary) and Mr. Morley (the Home Rule Chief Secretary). The noble figure of Thomas Drummond overtops all the Irish administrators. He strove strenuously (1835–40) to govern the country in accordance with popular opinion. From the day of his arrival to the day of his death he

was denounced by the English Ascendancy. Drummond perished in the service of Ireland, struggling to the last to stem the torrent of injustice, ignorance, and folly, which ultimately swept him to the grave. The story of his life is a proof of the hopelessness of any man attempting to rule Ireland in accordance with Irish opinion while he holds office at the mercy of an English Parliament. Suppose, my Lord, that England had been conquered by Spain in 1588, and that between 1832 and 1904, at the end of centuries of dominion, England had, in the main, been ruled by Spanish Grandees, all Catholics, out of sympathy with the people, ignorant of their history, indifferent to their wants, disregarding their cherished traditions, despising their national aspirations, ignoring their religion, and refusing to do them justice, except under the pressure of fear—what would the world think of Spain? What would the English do?

The following is not a description of a dependency of Spain or Russia, but a description of a dependency of England given seven hundred years after its "conquest." "I do not believe," said Mr. Chamberlain in a famous speech in 1885, "that the great majority of Englishmen have the slightest conception of the system under which this free nation attempts to rule the sister country. It is a system which is founded on the bayonets of thirty thousand soldiers encamped permanently as in a hostile country. It is a system as completely centralised and bureaucratic as that with which Russia governs Poland, or as that which prevailed in Venice under the Austrian rule. An Irishman at this moment cannot move a step—he cannot lift a finger in any parochial, muni-

cial, or educational work without being confronted with, interfered with, controlled by an English official, appointed by a foreign Government, and without a shade or shadow of representative authority." The conqueror of whom this can be said, centuries after the conquest, stands condemned before the tribunal of history. The English show much wisdom in the management of their affairs all over the world. Why are they such utter fools in Ireland? "Irish writers," says Mr. Richey (I quote the substance of his words), "are fond of charging the English Government with tyranny and violence. But that is not the charge that I bring against them. The charge that I bring against them is imbecility."

What, then, is England's title in Ireland? Conquest?—a bad title *à priori*, for it rests on physical force. Conquest by physical force, I admit, may ultimately come to have moral sanction—the only good title to the existence of any government. But has the government of the English in Ireland this sanction? That is the rub. The plea of the conqueror is always a specious one. He is not honest. He is not truthful. He says to the people whose national existence he means to destroy, "I do not come to injure you; quite the contrary. I come to make you happy. I come to destroy the bad government under which you live. The men of your own nation do not know how to govern you. I can govern you. I understand you. I am your friend. I come to establish law and order, to civilise you, to elevate you spiritually, to enrich you materially, to make you blessed, prosperous, and free. You will find me a guardian angel." That the people should reply, "Angel or devil, we don't want you. We want

to be left to ourselves, to develop on our own lines, to work out our own destiny, in our own way"—that the people should say these things does not affect him. He replies, "But it is good for you that I should come," and he comes and he kills and he plunders and he stays, and he says to the conquered, "You must have my laws and my institutions, my religion, my language, my dress, my customs, my manners. You must do all these things as I do them, and if you refuse I will break you on the wheel."

I do not say that there are not exceptions to this general rule of the conqueror's policy. There is a notable exception, which recent events have brought to our minds—the case of Russia and Finland. Russia conquered Finland in 1809; it was called the "cession" of Finland to Russia—a pretty diplomatic phrase. This conquest obtained moral sanction by treaty rights. The compact between the two countries was: a common sovereign, and, for the rest, political autonomy. Finns, representing the public opinion of Finland, administered the affairs of Finland. Finnish laws and customs were observed, the Finnish religion was respected and recognised, the Finnish language was the language of the Finnish State and the Finnish people. The Finns were loyal to the Russian connection; they were happy, prosperous, and free. For nearly a century this compact was honourably kept. Then in a moment of madness it was broken, to the shame of the Russian Government. The case of Russia and Finland was, I say, a case of conquest obtaining moral sanction by treaty rights. But the treaty has been broken, the moral sanction is gone, and the whole civilised world would hail, and ought to hail,

with joy the destruction of the Russian power in Finland. How far the conquest of Ireland by England has ever received any moral sanction I shall now consider.

II

"THE evils of Ireland," said Lord Palmerston, "may be traced to the history of Ireland." "The history of Ireland," said Lord Shelbourne, "is the history of English policy in Ireland." This latter statement is not quite accurate. Ireland had a history—a brilliant history—before an Englishman landed on her shores. But so far as the history of the last seven hundred years is concerned the statement is true enough.

The idea of the average Englishman—the average intelligent Englishman—about Ireland is that the Irish were wild, naked savages, wandering through forests and bogs, until the English came to feed, clothe, and reclaim them. Were you to tell the Englishman of this type that the Irish were civilised and Christianised when the Anglo-Saxon was still in barbaric darkness he would laugh at you. Were you to go further and tell him that the Anglo-Saxon owed his own reclamation largely to the labours of Irishmen, he would think you were a fool. I remember, my Lord, some thirty years ago, when I first came to England, dining one night with some English friends. In the course of conversation I happened, casually, to mention the Brehon Law. There was a burst of laughter. "How ridiculous," said our host, "talking of the Brehon Law. I should like to know (contemptuously) what the Brehon Law was." I tried to explain, and to say something about

Irish civilisation, but there was a fire of raillery which soon put me out of action. I might as well have spoken of the early civilisation of the Kingdom of Dahomey. It so happened that about this time Sir Henry Maine had published his admirable book on "The Early History of Institutions." The day following the dinner I possessed myself of the book and went with it, in hand, to my host. "Now," I said to him, "when I spoke of the Brehon Law last night, you all laughed." "Certainly," he said, "we did. How ridiculous you Irish are! Why, you had no laws till we came amongst you." I said, "Look at this book, a history of early Aryan institutions, by a great English jurist. What is it chiefly about, do you think?" Of course he did not know. I said, "Three-fourths of this book are practically about the Brehon Law at which you were all laughing last night." I had been put out of action then, but I put my friend out of action now. Yet he was not converted. He relapsed in a few months and was as bad as ever. His respect for the Irish did not increase, but I rather fancy his respect for Sir Henry Maine diminished.

There is nothing so painful for a conqueror as to be told that he is not the author of all that is good in the conquered. It is still more painful for him to be told that he is the author of much that is evil.

I am not, my Lord, going to dwell on the subject of early Irish civilisation. I am not, indeed, going to dwell upon any particular period of Irish history. My object simply is, to deal briefly with historical facts in order to see how far they throw light on the question—Is there any moral sanction for the government of England in Ireland? I touch upon

the subject of early civilisation simply to point out that the Irish needed no conquering hand to carry on the work of civilisation among them; that they were themselves capable of rising—and did rise—to the highest point of civilisation attainable in the early centuries of the Christian era. You are no doubt familiar with Sir Henry Maine's able and interesting book. It will bear re-reading again and again. I shall now take the liberty of directing your Excellency's attention to another book which has recently been published—one of the best books, I think, ever written about Ireland—Dr. Joyce's "Social History of Ancient Ireland." This book is valuable not only for the original research which it shows, and for the new facts which it brings to light, but also because it collects old facts for which one had previously to search in many directions, and in directions not accessible to the ordinary reader.

Were you to tell an Englishman that St. Patrick had come to Ireland in 432, and that St. Augustine did not come to England until 597, he would not believe it. The idea of our old friend the average intelligent Englishman, probably, is that St. Augustine converted St. Patrick, and then sent St. Patrick to convert the Irish. That Patrick had converted the Irish before Augustine was heard of; that Irish missionaries under the direction of Columba settled in Iona; and that from thence, as well as from Ireland, Irish missionaries went forth to shed the light of Christianity throughout Britain and Europe, he would regard as a grotesque Irish exaggeration. Yet such is the fact; and the authorities will be found in Mr. Joyce. Let me quote some of them; I shall begin with Montalembert: "Forty-eight years

after Augustine and his Roman monks landed on the shores of pagan England, an Anglo-Saxon Prince (Oswald) invoked the aid of the monks of Iona in the conversion of the Saxons of the North. . . . The spiritual conquest of the island (Britain), abandoned for a time by the Roman missionaries, was now about to be taken up by the Celtic monks. The Italians (under Augustine) had made the first step, and the Irish now appeared to resume the uncompleted work. What the sons of St. Benedict could only begin, was to be completed by the sons of St. Columba. . . . Of the eight kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxon Confederation, that of Kent alone was exclusively won and retained by the Roman monks." Let me quote Dr. Lightfoot, the Protestant Bishop of Durham. Having said that Iona was the cradle of English Christianity, he proceeds:—

"Though nearly forty years had elapsed since Augustine's first landing in England, Christianity was still confined to its first conquest, the south-east corner of the island, the Kingdom of Kent. . . . Then commenced those thirty years of earnest, energetic labour, carried on by those Celtic missionaries and their disciples, from Lindisfarne, as their spiritual citadel, which ended in the submission of England to the gentle yoke of Christ." Again, for Aidan he claims "the first place in the evangelisation of our race. Augustine was the Apostle of Kent, but Aidan was the Apostle of England."

Dr. Joyce does well in quoting the opinion of Spenser, with reference to the early civilisation of Ireland. Spenser, of course, is not an authority on the subject, but, as Dr. Joyce says, it is well to learn what cultivated Englishmen of the sixteenth century had to say upon the matter.

“It is certain that Ireland hath had the use of letters very eminently and long before England. Whence they had those letters it is hard to say ; for whether they at their first coming into the land or afterwards by trading with other nations which had letters, learned of them or devised them among themselves, is very doubtful ; but that they had letters anciently is nothing doubtful, for the Saxons of England are said to have their letters and learning and learned them from the Irish, and that also appeareth by the likenesse of the character, for the Saxon character is the same with the Irish.”

But I must not labour the point. Suffice it to say that from the death of St. Patrick to the arrival of the Danes the progress of Ireland in religion and civilisation, in art, music, literature, and laws, was rapid and remarkable. Churches and monasteries, schools and colleges sprang up everywhere throughout the land. Irish missionaries went forth to preach the Gospel in many countries, and to win converts for the faith of Christ. Irish scholars filled the world with their fame, and Irish schools attracted students from the most civilised parts of Europe.

I have said that on one occasion I drew upon myself a fire of raillery by mentioning the Brehon Law. It was not the only occasion on which I exposed myself to the artillery of English wit and humour. One day I mentioned the name of King Brian in the company of English friends. His name was the signal for unmixed merriment. They regarded Brian as a mythical character, and that I should have treated him as a historical character excited unbounded hilarity. I said, “I do not laugh

at your Egbert." They replied, "Oh! Egbert; that is a very different thing—but Brian Boru," and then there was a roar of laughter. "Yet," I said, "Brian has been called 'the Egbert of Ireland.'" I might have added that I knew something of Egbert, but that my excellent English friends knew nothing of Brian.

Brian, my Lord, was, in truth, one of the most remarkable men of those early days. And we have the authentic story of his life written by his own secretary. I cannot ask your Lordship to read this book—"The Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaell." You probably would not have time; but you might read the introduction of the translator, Dr. Todd, of Trinity College, Dublin. You might also read "The Norse Saga Burnt Njal." I once heard a distinguished British authority say that nothing could better show what a real historic personage Brian was than the mention made of him, and the high tribute paid to his abilities and virtues, in the Saga in question.

The work of Brian's life is comprised within the years 968 to 1014, when he rallied his people, overthrew the Danes, imposed his will upon the Provincial Kings and Princes, strengthened the Central Monarchy, consolidated the country, and devoted himself to the arts of good government. He made Ireland a Nation. That was the achievement of his life. "The lesson taught by the monks," says Mr. Gardner, speaking of King Egbert, "was one which men are slow to learn. The whole of England was full of bloodshed and confusion. The Kings were perpetually fighting with one another. Sometimes one, sometimes another would have the upper hand. At last Egbert, the King of the West Saxons, subdued all the others."

What Egbert did for England, Brian in his day did in large measure for Ireland.

I shall shock the English critic when I say that during the whole period of the Anglo-Norman settlement, from the coming of Strongbow to the accession of the Tudors, Ireland never reached the same stage of political development arrived at in the days of Brian. Yet this is true. We know that the growth of a nation is slow, and that great men play great parts in the building of nations, for it needs a strong man to break up the territorial divisions which hinder national development. The division of Ireland into four provincial kingdoms was the curse of the country—a curse, however, not peculiar to Ireland, for England had her Heptarchy, and other countries had their divisions too. The provincial divisions of Ireland led, as in similar cases in other lands, to mischievous internal disturbances. It was the merit of Brian's government that he curbed provincial kings and gave an impetus to national unification. It was disastrous to Ireland that he fell before his work was completed. Brian laid the foundation of a strong national monarchy; and, had his son, Murrough—a man of remarkable ability—and his grandson, Turrough—a youth of great promise—lived to finish the work, the whole current of Irish history might have been changed; but they all fell at the battle of Clontarf. Brian had no worthy successor; and the progress of national development was checked by his death. Such mischances, however, have not been uncommon in other lands. The ebb and flow of national development fluctuate in all countries in the early stages of civilisation. "The development

of the State," as Mr. Wyndham has recently said, "has (not) proceeded without breach of continuity." The misfortune of Ireland was that in a moment of national weakness—in a moment when the continuity of political development was broken—a wave of foreign invasion—the Anglo-Norman Settlement—came to stop the revival of national life. With the Anglo-Norman Settlement, and its moral sanctions, I shall now deal.

III

I HAVE said that the misfortune of Ireland was that in a moment of National weakness—in a moment when the continuity of political development was broken—a wave of foreign invasion—the Anglo-Norman Settlement—came to stop the revival of national life. "Not at all," says the English critic; "the Anglo-Norman Settlement was the salvation of Ireland." I shall answer the English critic by the production of authorities which even he will respect.

1st. First let me take Mr. Richey, the eminent historian. "In the twelfth century the Irish Celts were in a state of political disorganisation, but they still had a feeling of nationality, and had the form, at least, of a national monarchy, and justice, criminal and civil, was administered among them, according to a definite code of law." Again, "The English Government during this period (1368) was a source of unmixed evil to the country. The English Kings had practically abolished the exercise of Sovereign power in Ireland. . . . The English Executive neither fulfilled the duty of a Government nor permitted any other to be established.

Their highest aim was self-preservation ; and the means by which they sought it were the fomenting of civil war between the Barons and Chiefs outside the Pale, the rendering of assistance to any pretender who promised to embarrass or depose a tribal chieftain, and frequent raids equally barbarous and futile." Again, " At the commencement of the sixteenth century there remained no tradition of national unity, no trace of an organisation by which they could be welded into one people ; the Celtic population had found the rule of England scarcely less injurious to them than the invasions of the Danes." But, my Lord, these quotations do not represent the worst aspects of the case from the English point of view ; for there were not only disorders fomented by the English generally, " but," says Mr. Richey, " of all the inhabitants of Ireland, those under the immediate government of the English King were the most miserable."

2nd. Next, I shall quote Hallam, who speculates on what might have happened if the Normans had not come :—" We may be led by the analogy of other countries to think it probable that if Ireland had not tempted the cupidity of her neighbours, there would have arisen in the course of time some Egbert or Harold Harfager to consolidate the provincial Kingdoms into one hereditary monarchy."

3rd. I shall quote Sir Henry Maine :—" The Anglo-Norman Settlement acted like a running sore on the east coast of Ireland, constantly irritating the Celtic regions beyond the Pale, and deepening the confusion which prevailed there. If the country had been left to itself, one of the great Irish tribes would most certainly have conquered the rest."

4th. I shall quote Mr. Lecky :—

“The English rule as a living reality was confined and concentrated in the narrow limits of the Pale. The hostile power planted in the heart of the nation destroyed all possibility of central government, while it was itself incapable of fulfilling that function. Like a spear-point embedded in a living body, it inflamed all around it, and deranged every vital function. It prevented the gradual reduction of the island by some native Clovis, which would necessarily have taken place if the Anglo-Normans had not arrived, and instead of that peaceful and almost silent amalgamation of races, customs, laws, and languages which took place in England, and which is the source of many of the best elements in English life and character, the two nations remained in Ireland for centuries in hostility.”

Next, I shall quote Sir John Davies, who has perhaps drawn up the weightiest indictment of all against the English Conqueror in Ireland :—

“It is manifest that such as had the Government of Ireland under the Crown of England did intend to make perpetual separation and enmity between the English (Anglo-Normans) and Irish, pretending, no doubt, that the English should in the end root out the Irish, which the English not being able to do, did cause perpetual war between the nations.” And, lastly, I shall refer to an epitome of the views of the same writer cited by Mr. Lecky: “Too weak to introduce order and obedience, the English authority was yet sufficient to check the growth of any enterprising genius among the natives; and though it could bestow no true form of civil government, it was able to prevent the rise of any such form.”

I need not press the point further. The “con-

queror" who could not establish a settled Government, but who could prevent its establishment by any one else; who could not promote the development of the State, but who could prevent it, can lay no claim to the sanctions of morality for his presence in a land where, after centuries of trial, he was still hated and defied. I do not say that the Norman Settlement in itself would necessarily have proved an evil to Ireland. Under certain conditions it might even have been conceivably beneficial. Had Normans and Celts been allowed to fuse in Ireland as Norman and Saxon had fused in England, a strong Irish nation would have been built up, as a strong English nation had been built up in similar circumstances. But it is notorious that the policy of England was to prevent the fusion of Celt and Norman, and to check the political development of the country. Let me put a case. England was fortunate in her conquest by the Normans. But had France been strong enough to interfere with William I. to prevent the fusion of races and to check the national growth, then the Norman Conquest would have been a curse instead of a blessing. Unfortunately for Ireland, England was strong enough to do in that country what France was not strong enough to do in England. She interfered with Norman and Celt at every turn, tried to prevent the fusion of the two races, and checked the national growth. Scarcely in the history of the world is there another instance where the conqueror was so incapable of good, and so capable of evil, as in the case of the English "conqueror" in Ireland during the four and a half centuries which followed the arrival of Strongbow.

I have said that during these centuries England established no moral claim to the possession of Ireland. In fact, she did not establish a physical claim, for at the commencement of the sixteenth century her power was almost wholly destroyed. Practically she then held only Dublin and a ring around it. On the accession of Henry VII. the struggle was renewed, and in 1541 the Irish made peace with Henry VIII.

Henry VII., my Lord, was a statesman. When he was told that all Ireland could not govern the Earl of Kildare he said, "Then let the Earl of Kildare govern all Ireland." I remember once telling this story to Cardinal Manning. He said, shaking his finger in characteristic fashion, "Very wise, very wise; Ireland should be governed by those who know Ireland and whom Ireland trusts. If the English connection does not rest on this principle it cannot rest on any principle of justice or sound policy."

The policy of the first two Tudors was not to "root out" the Irish, as the policy of their predecessors had been. It has been said that, as these Tudors had Celtic blood in their veins, they were sympathetic to the Irish. I know not how this may be. I know not, indeed, in what direction the sympathies of Henry VIII. ran; but I think it is highly probable that the Celtic blood in the veins of father and son enabled them at all events to see somebody else's point of view as well as their own—a thing which the pure-blooded Anglo-Saxon never can see. In 1540–41 Henry VIII. had to face this situation. The Irish had carried on a fierce war against his father and himself. The question now was, should this war be continued to the bitter end, or should peace be

made on terms which would preserve the English connection, and at the same time save the Irish race from destruction or spoliation? Henry VIII. had many troubles besides the Irish trouble, and he was willing to make peace on those conditions.

The feeling of the Irish—of some of the Irish Chiefs at all events—seems to have been that the war should be carried on until the foreigner was utterly driven out, but, as so often happens in similar cases, more moderate counsels ultimately prevailed. Some of the Irish Chiefs went to London to see Henry himself. They talked over terms of peace with the English Monarch. Henry proposed in effect that he should be acknowledged King of Ireland, that is to say, that the two countries should be united under a common Crown. For the rest, that Ireland should practically have political autonomy. The Feudal system was to be adopted instead of the Tribal system, but Irish Chiefs were not to be despoiled of their territories; there was to be no confiscation, no planting of needy English adventurers thirsting for spoil. These terms the Irish chiefs ultimately accepted, and the Parliament of 1541 was summoned to ratify them. I make no reference to other Acts, relating to religion, manners, customs, language. Those Acts were really of no practical account. Of course there were no doctrinal changes in religion, and the people kept their manners, customs, language. Archbishop Brown (Henry's Archbishop) said High Mass in Dublin to celebrate the peace, and the King's Speech in Parliament was read in Irish as well as in English.

The question now arises, did this peace give moral sanction to the English connection?

There are those who say that it did not, because that the Irish Chiefs were not authorised by the Irish tribes to make it. On the other hand, there are those who say that it did, because that the Parliament of 1541 was a thoroughly representative assembly, and that the Chiefs were entitled to speak for the people. But, my Lord, we need not trouble ourselves about the controversy, because the peace was broken almost as soon as the breath was out of the body of Henry VIII. The first breach was made in it by Edward VI. The breach was widened by Mary. It was made irreparable by Elizabeth. The territories of Leix and Offaly were confiscated in the reign of Mary. Leix and Offaly were converted into English Shires, and a horde of English settlers were imported to take the place of the plundered natives.

The wars of Elizabeth were barbarous in the last extreme; the policy of her Ministers was cruel, treacherous, and bloodthirsty. Many pleasant things cannot be said of Henry VIII. I am, therefore, all the more anxious to emphasise the fact that he kept the peace of 1541 to the day of his death. Afterwards the policy of extermination and confiscation which he strenuously refused to adopt was carried out by his successors with ruthless rapacity. "The warfare which ensued," says Mr. Richey, "resembled that waged by the early settlers in America with the native tribes. No mercy whatever was shown to the natives, no act of treachery was considered dishonourable, no personal tortures and indignities were spared to the captors." "The suppression of the native race," says Mr. Lecky, "in the wars against Shane O'Neil, Desmond, and Tyrone was carried on with a ferocity which surpassed that of

Alva in the Netherlands, and has seldom been exceeded in the page of history. . . . The slaughter of Irishmen was looked upon as literally the slaughter of wild beasts. Not only the men, but even the women and children who fell into the hands of the English were deliberately and systematically butchered. The sword was not found sufficient. But another method was found more efficacious. Year after year, over a great part of all Ireland, all means of human subsistence was destroyed; no quarter was given to persons who surrendered, and the whole population was skilfully and steadily starved to death. The pictures of the condition of Ireland at this time are as terrible as anything in human history." And all this, my Lord, in pursuance of a well-defined policy. "The Government," continues Mr. Lecky, "believed that the one efficient policy for making Ireland useful to England was, in the words of Sir John Davis, to root out the Irish from the soil, to confiscate the property of the Septs, and to plant the country systematically with English tenants."

In 1602 the Irish Chiefs were beaten at Kinsale, and the "rebellion" of O'Neil and O'Donnell was crushed. In the reign of James I. the territories of O'Neil and O'Donnell in Ulster were confiscated, and Ulster was planted. It is the opinion of Mr. Richey that all subsequent troubles may be traced to the Plantation of Ulster. It led to the Rebellion of 1641; the Rebellion of 1641 led to the Cromwellian War and settlement; and the Cromwellian War and settlement led to the Rebellion of 1689-91.

I do not think that it needs much argument to satisfy your Excellency that from the reign

of Edward VI. to the fall of James II. there was a year when it could be said that the English Government in Ireland rested on any moral sanction. Let me quote Mr. Gardner, Edmund Burke, and Mr. Lecky on the morality of the plantation of Ulster.

Mr. Gardner:—"Six counties were declared to be forfeited to the Crown under an artificial treason law which had no hold on the Irish conscience. English and Scotch colonists were brought in to occupy the richest parts of the soil. The children of the land were thrust forth to find what sustenance they could on the leavings of the intruders, and were debarred even the poor privilege of serving the new settlers for fear lest they should be tempted to fall upon their masters unawares."

Edmund Burke:—"Unheard-of confiscations were made in the Northern parts upon grounds of plots and conspiracies never proved upon their supposed authors. The war of chicane succeeded to the war of arms and of hostile statutes; a regular series of operations were carried on in the ordinary Courts of Justice, and by Special Commissions and inquisitions; first under the pretence of tenures, and then of titles in the Crown, for the purpose of the total extirpation of the interest of the natives in their own soil—until this species of ravage being carried to the last excess of oppression and insolence . . . it kindled the flames of that Rebellion which broke out in 1641."

Mr. Lecky:—"It had become clear beyond all doubt to the native population that the old scheme of rooting them out from the soil was the settled policy of the Government; that the land which remained to them was marked as a prey by hungry adventurers, by the refuse of

the population of England and Scotland, by men who cared no more for their rights and happiness than they did for the worms severed by their own spades." So much for the morality of the Plantation of Ulster.

Finally, let me quote Mr. Lecky on the morality of the Cromwellian settlement. Having stated on the authority of Petty that "a third of the population had been blotted out" by the war, he proceeds:—"Above all, the great end at which the English adventurers had been steadily aiming since the reign of Elizabeth was accomplished. All, or almost all, of the lands of the Irish in the three largest and richest provinces were confiscated, and divided among those adventurers who had lent money to the Parliament and among the Puritan soldiers whose pay was greatly in arrear. The Irish who were considered least guilty were assigned land in Connaught, and that province, which rock and morass have doomed to a perpetual poverty, and which was at this time almost desolated by famine and by massacre, was assigned as the home of the Irish race. The confiscations were arranged under different categories; but they were of such a nature that scarcely any Catholic or even old Protestant landlord could escape. . . . Papists, who, during the whole of the long war had never borne arms against the Parliament, but who had not manifested 'a constant good affection' towards it, were to be deprived of their estates, but were to receive two-thirds of the value in Connaught. Under this head were included all who lived quietly in their houses in quarters occupied by rebels or by the King's troops, who had paid taxes to the rebels or to the King after the rupture with

the Parliament, who had abstained from actively supporting the cause of the Parliament. Such a confiscation was practically universal. The ploughmen and the labourers who were necessary for the cultivation of the soil were suffered to remain, but all the old proprietors, all the best and greatest names in Ireland, were compelled to abandon their old possessions, to seek a home in Connaught or in some happier land beyond the sea. A very large proportion of them had committed no crime whatever, and it is probable that not a sword would have been drawn in Ireland in rebellion, if those who ruled it had suffered the natives to enjoy their lands and their religion in peace. The Cromwellian settlement is the foundation of that deep and lasting division between the proprietary and the tenants which is the chief cause of the political and social evils of Ireland."

An estimable gentleman who recently wrote a book upon Ireland urged the Irish people to forget the past. But the past which has made the present, and may make the future, cannot be forgotten.

IV

THE "Rebellion" of 1689-91 was ended by the Treaty of Limerick. The terms of the treaty may be summed up in a sentence. They came substantially to this; England and Ireland were to remain united under a common crown; for the rest, the Irish were to have political autonomy, civil and religious liberty, and the possession of their estates. Again, the question arises, Did the Treaty of Limerick give moral sanction to the English connection? and, again, we are spared the trouble of discussing the subject, because the treaty was broken

almost as soon as the ink on it was dry. Never was there a better opportunity given to a conqueror for making peace with the conquered on just, wise, and honourable terms than was afforded by the termination of the Rebellion of 1689-91. William III. grasped the situation and offered terms which were alike creditable to victor and vanquished. He was a statesman. He believed in winning, not in forcing the allegiance of a conquered people. Not so the English Parliament and the English colonists in Ireland. Their motto was *Væ Victis*. They believed only in the enslavement and utter degradation of the Irish race. To make this end sure the estates of the Catholics were again confiscated. A fresh horde of English adventurers were poured into the country, and the Penal Code was passed. No one has summed up the result of the English Conquest with greater force than did Lord Clare in his famous speech on the Union in 1800. "What, then, was the situation of Ireland at the Revolution, and what is it at this day? The whole power and property of the country have been conferred by successive monarchs of England upon an English colony, composed of three sets of English adventurers, who poured into this country at the termination of three successive rebellions. Confiscation is their common title; and from their first settlement they have been hemmed in on every side by the old inhabitants of the island, brooding over their discontents in sullen indignation." "Confiscation is their common title." Confiscation, my Lord, is the title of England in Ireland—a title based on force, fraud, and robbery.

I need not dwell upon the Penal Code. The religion of the people was proscribed; their

liberties were taken away, their lands were plundered. A single sentence spoken by an "Irish" judge in the Penal days will give a better idea of this Code than anything I can say. "The laws," said this judge, in 1757, "do not presume a Papist to exist, nor can they breathe without the connivance of Government." In 1772, your predecessor, Lord Townshend, said, "The laws against Popery have so far operated, that there is no Popish family at this day remaining of any great weight from landed property."

"The strength of the Party," says Howard, in his Popery Cases, "which was the cause of these laws, is almost entirely broken to pieces in this Kingdom, though, perhaps, their numbers are not decreased; besides, there is scarcely any landed property among them." Finally, Mr. Lecky has described the operation of the Penal Code with characteristic truth and eloquence. "It was intended to degrade and impoverish, to destroy in its victims the spring and buoyance of enterprise, to dig a deep chasm between Catholics and Protestants. These ends it fully attained. It formed the social condition, it regulated the disposition of property, it exercised a most enduring and pernicious influence upon the character of the people, and some of the worst features of the latter may be distinctly traced to its influence. It may be possible to find in the Statute books both of Protestant and Catholic countries laws corresponding to most parts of the Irish Penal Code, and in some respects surpassing its most atrocious provisions, but it is not the less true that that Code, taken as a whole, has a character entirely distinctive. It was directed, not against the few, but against the many. It was not the

persecution of a sect, but the degradation of a nation. It was the instrument employed by a conquering race, supported by a neighbouring Power, to crush to the dust the people among whom they were planted. And indeed, when we remember that the greater part of it was in force for nearly a century; that its victims formed at least three-fourths of the nation; that its degrading and dividing influence extended to every field of social, professional, intellectual, and even domestic life; and that it was enacted without the provocation of any rebellion, in defiance of a Treaty which distinctly guaranteed the Irish Catholics from any further opposition on account of their religion, it may be justly regarded as one of the blackest pages in the history of persecution."

For nearly three-quarters of a century after the Treaty of Limerick the Catholics were beaten to the ground, trampled in the dust. Then they began once more to fight for freedom, but made little progress until the necessities of England forced her to consider their claims. Between 1775 and 1781 England was engaged in a deadly conflict with her American Colonies; she was also engaged in a conflict with her colonists in Ireland, against whom she had passed an insane commercial code. In the fight against England the English colonists joined hands with the native race, and the outcome of this union was Catholic relief in 1778 (when the Catholics were allowed to hold landed property), Free Trade in 1779, and above all, Legislative Independence in 1782. The Irish Protestants, as Burke said, at last discovered that they had a country, and that their interests were bound up with those of the masses of the people among whom they lived. In 1782, as

your Lordship knows, England declared that the independence of the Irish Parliament was inviolable. The words of the English Act ran:—"Be it enacted that the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by his Majesty and the Parliament of that kingdom, in all cases whatever, and to have all actions and suits at law, or in equity, which may be instituted in that kingdom, decided in his Majesty's Courts therein, finally and without appeal from thence, shall be, and is hereby, declared to be established and ascertained for ever, and shall at no time hereafter be questioned or questionable." Once more the question arises, Did the compact of 1782 give moral sanction to the English connection;? and once more we are spared the trouble of discussing the point, because England broke the compact in 1800 and destroyed the Irish Parliament. Mr. Lecky has told the story in six lines:—"In the case of Ireland, as truly as in the case of Poland, a national Constitution was destroyed by a foreign Power, contrary to the wishes of the people. In the one case the deed was a crime of violence; in the other it was a case of treachery and corruption. In both cases a legacy of enduring bitterness was the result." Three treaties had been made in two and a half centuries between Irish and English—in 1541, in 1691, in 1782. England broke them all. If broken faith, my Lord, can give a good title, then England's title in Ireland rests on a moral basis. The policy of broken faith did not end with the Union. The promise of a "Kingdom" (so Great Britain and Ireland were called) "united" by just laws, wise administration, and a common patriotism, springing from the enjoyment of common rights

and common freedom, was not fulfilled. Englishmen cannot plead even the poor excuse that, though they destroyed the Irish Parliament, they governed Ireland well without it. Good government could not have made the Act of Union legal and moral, but good government could alone be pleaded in extenuation of England's guilt. This plea cannot be allowed. I care not, my Lord, from what point of view you look at the question—whether from the point of view of the Catholic and the tenant, or from the point of view of the Protestant and the landlord, aye, even from the point of view of England herself—the Government of England in Ireland during the nineteenth century must stand condemned. I will take the point of view of the Catholic and the tenant first. What were the promises made to the Catholics? They were told that they would be emancipated, that they would get fair play, that they would receive from the Imperial Parliament a measure of justice which it would never be in the power of the Irish Parliament to confer upon them. None of these promises were kept. In 1802 Lord Redesdale was sent to Ireland as Lord Chancellor. He struck the keynote of English policy in the following words: "Catholics must have no political power." In 1809 the Prime Minister of the day said: "I cannot conceive a time or a change of circumstances which can render further concessions to the Catholics consistent with the safety of the State." These declarations of policy are a curious commentary on the words used by Mr. Pitt in 1800. "In the Union, Ireland will see the avenues to honour, to distinction, and exalted situations in the general seat of Empire

opened to all those whose abilities and talents enable them to indulge an honourable and laudable ambition."

After a struggle which lasted over a quarter of a century Catholic Emancipation was granted, when England at length discovered that it was safer to surrender than to resist. The policy of injustice was tempered by the policy of fear. That Catholic Emancipation should have been delayed in violation of the promises made at the time of the Union, until 1829, and that it should have been only granted then under the pressure of a formidable revolutionary movement, was bad enough; but worse remains. The Act was no sooner placed on the Statute Book than it was made a dead letter. Mr. Lecky described the government of Ireland in 1833 thus: "In 1833—four years after Emancipation—there was not in Ireland a single Catholic judge or stipendiary magistrate. All the High Sheriffs, the overwhelming majority of the unpaid magistrates and of the grand jurors, the five Inspectors-General, and the thirty-two Sub-Inspectors of the Police were Protestants. The chief towns were in the hands of narrow, corrupt, and for the most part intensely bigoted Corporations. For many years promotion had been steadily withheld from those who advocated Catholic Emancipation, and the majority of the people thus found their bitterest enemies in the foremost places."

Between 1835 and 1840 Catholic Emancipation ceased to be a dead letter during the short-lived Administration of Thomas Drummond. But on the fall of the Melbourne Ministry the policy of proscription was revived, and the people once more saw their bitterest enemies in the foremost places.

I have already said that since 1832—in fact, since the Union—there has not been a single Catholic Lord Lieutenant, or a single Catholic Chief Secretary. There have been fifteen Under Secretaries, and only three Catholics among them. There have been fourteen Lord Chancellors, and only two Catholics among them.

There have been only two Lord Chief Justices, only two Chief Justices of the Common Pleas, and only two Chief Barons of the Exchequer Catholics. “The Castle,” says a recent writer, “has six great officers of state; five are Protestants, one is a Catholic. Of sixteen judges of the Superior Courts thirteen are Protestants. Of twenty-one County Court judges fifteen are Protestants. There were twenty-one Inspectors in August last employed by the Estates Commissioners at salaries of £800 a year each; every one was a Protestant. The Land Commission has six commissioners; three are Catholics in a country where the Catholics are seventy per cent. of the inhabitants. The Privy Councillors are almost exclusively Protestants.”

I need not expand the list. It is notorious that the highest positions in the government of Ireland have been and are filled by Protestants, almost wholly to the exclusion of those who professed the religion of the nation. There is nothing bigoted in calling attention to these facts. The Irish do not want a Catholic Government. They want a National Government. Of course a National Government in a country like Ireland must, from the nature of the case, be in the main a Catholic Government because Ireland is in the main a Catholic nation. It has well been said that the government of a country must partake of the character of the people. Mr. Carlile, the first Resident Commissioner

of "National" education in Ireland, has put the point well :—"The Government of any nation must necessarily partake of the character, particularly of the religious character, of the nation. We do not expect to find a Christian Government in a heathen country, nor a heathen Government in a Christian country; a Roman Catholic Government in a Protestant country, nor a Protestant Government in a Roman Catholic country. . . . If the people be Protestant, the Government will be so also; if the people be Roman Catholic, such will be the Government; if the people be both denominations, so also will the Government. . . . Precisely as is the people, so will the governors be." Ireland is yet, my Lord, without a National University; and the people see, in the refusal of the English Parliament to establish a great teaching centre vivified by the spirit of Nationality, that the foreigner rules in the land, and that Irish wishes must be subservient to English prejudices.

I pass to the tenants' point of view. It goes without saying that one of the first duties of a Government is to give fair play to the industrial pursuits of the people. Laws which are fatal to the material progress of a nation are only a shade less criminal than laws which are fatal to its spiritual progress. The laws of England in Ireland throughout almost the whole of the nineteenth century have been fatal alike to the spiritual and material progress of the people. But I am only dealing now with the question of material progress.

Land is the great Irish industry. That being so, what are we to say to the Government and Parliament which crippled it for over three-quarters of a century? It was proved again

and again before Select Committees of the House of Commons, Select Committees of the House of Lords, Royal Commissions, that Irish misery and Irish disorder were due to the system of land tenure which was upheld by English bayonets. Yet not a single Act calculated to reform this system was placed on the Statute Book until seventy years after the Union. And even the Act then passed was a failure. The English Parliament is not only to be charged with neglect in reference to the Irish land question, but with incompetence as well. "In our very remedies," Mr. Gladstone once exclaimed in despair, "we have failed." The Land Act of 1870 passed under the pressure of a revolutionary organisation, was followed by the Land Act of 1881, passed when a reign of terror prevailed in Ireland. Nothing can be more humiliating than the reason given by Lord Salisbury for accepting the Act of 1881: "In view of the prevailing agitation, and having regard to the state of anarchy (in Ireland), I cannot recommend my followers to vote against the second reading of the Bill." The policy of injustice was once more tempered by the policy of fear.

All parties admit that the Land Act of 1881 did not settle the Irish land question, and the party to which your Lordship belongs avow that, on the contrary, it only made confusion worse confounded. A series of Acts followed, aiming at the settlement which the Act of '81 failed to accomplish. There was the Land Purchase Act of 1885, the Land Tenure Act of 1887, and finally there was Mr. Wyndham's Act of 1903. What, then, is the record of the English Parliament with reference to the encouragement of the one great Irish industry—land?

Utter neglect from 1800 to 1870; complete failure from 1870 to 1881; only partial success from 1881 to 1903.

The century had almost reached its close before anything effective was done to regulate the prosperous management of an industry on which the material well-being of the country depended. Is this a record which ought to inspire the Irish people with confidence in the English Parliament?

I now turn from the point of view of the Catholics and the tenants to the point of view of the Protestants and the landlords. At the time of the Union England promised to maintain the Protestant Episcopalian State Church in Ireland "for ever." She kept her word for three-quarters of a century, and then broke it. In 1869 the State Church was disestablished under the pressure of rebellious agitation. England had planted the Protestants in Ireland as a "garrison." The State Church was one of their strongholds. England swept it away, in defiance of their protests, to pacify the "rebels." She abandoned her allies in order to make peace over their heads with the "common enemy." This establishment was a breach of faith, a violation of legal and honourable obligations.

The Land System was another stronghold of the "garrison." England upheld it in all its strength for seventy years, and then gave way once more under rebellious pressure, sacrificing her friends to appease her enemies. In 1881 another step was taken in the policy of surrender, and the Land System was shaken to its foundation. Since then all parties in England have acquiesced in the determination to transfer the landed property of Ireland from the "garrison" to the "rebels." In the days of old

the landed property of Ireland was transferred from the "rebels" to the "garrison." That policy is now being reversed. It would seem as if England must always be confiscating something in the "Sister Isle." In 1885 a Reform Act was passed, throwing electoral power into the hands of the masses, and crippling the influence of the "loyalists." Worst of all, in 1898 the Local Government Act was passed, transferring the administration of local affairs from the "garrison" to the "rebels." The tendency of English legislation during the past twenty years has been hostile to the supremacy of the "loyal" party. The old policy of ruling Ireland by the Protestant Ascendency in the English interest, so as to make the connection secure, has been given up; and the only alternative now left to the "Loyalists" is to make peace with the "rebels" or to leave the country. This is the point of view of the Protestants and landlords. Nor have they the poor consolation of thinking that it is only their enemies the English Radicals who have, as they say, sapped the foundations of their power. Their friends the English Tories have been almost equally bad. The greatest Irish revolutionary measures were passed by Tories: the Catholic Relief Act of 1793, the Catholic Relief Act of 1829, and, above all, the Local Government Act of 1898. It has well been said that the Irish Catholic tenant in the days of his tribulation looked to the West for succour. The Irish Protestant landlord will tell you that his class in the day of *their* tribulation cannot look to the East for support. My Lord, the Irish Catholics do not love you; the Irish tenants do not love you; the Irish Protestants do not love you; the Irish landlords do not love you. A hundred years of "Union" has served

only to fill the minds of every section of the population—except the mere place-hunters—with distrust of England.

Lastly, let me take the point of view of Englishmen themselves. The ultra-Tory objects to every measure of reform passed since 1829, including the Act of 1829 itself. He condemns the policy of concession root and branch. He describes it as a policy of surrender and betrayal. But what say moderate Liberals and moderate Conservatives? They have nothing to say in defence of English policy from 1800 to 1829, and not much to say in defence of it from 1829 to 1869. Liberals, of course, approve of the Church Act of 1869, and Conservatives do not at all events dream of repealing it. Conservatives still condemn the Land Act of 1870 as “an unjust interference with the rights of property”; and Liberals admit that it was a failure. Again, Conservatives condemn the Land Act of 1881, and Liberals admit that it has not proved, as they believed it would prove, a final settlement of the land question.

Between 1881 and the present time, Ireland, Conservatives and Liberals allow, has remained in a constant state of unrest.

In a word, every Englishman of intelligence, knowledge, and sense is forced to recognise that the Union is a failure. No one can be more explicit on the point than the eminent Unionist, Mr. Dicey. He says: “Eighty-six years have elapsed since the conclusion of the Treaty of Union between England and Ireland. The two countries do not yet form a united nation. Irish disaffection to England is, if not deeper, more widespread than in 1800. An Act meant by its authors to be a source of the prosperity and concord which, though slowly, followed upon

the Union of Scotland, has not made Ireland rich, has not put an end to Irish lawlessness, has not terminated the feud between Protestants and Catholics, has not raised the position of Irish tenants, has not taken away the causes of Irish discontent, and has, therefore, not removed Irish disloyalty."

"We have made Ireland," wrote another English publicist, Joseph Kay—"I say it deliberately—we have made Ireland the most miserable and degraded country in the world. All the world is crying shame on us, but we are equally callous to the ignominy and to the results of our misgovernment." Finally, Lord John Russell has described the character of English rule in Ireland since the Union in a single sentence: "Your oppressions have taught the Irish to hate, your concessions to brave you; you have shown them how scanty is the stream of your justice, and how full the tribute of your fears." To sum up: the Union, immoral in its inception, has not been redeemed from its original infamy by the wisdom and justice of the Legislative Body, which, in defiance of treaty obligations, still usurps the rights of the Irish Parliament. This is the Irish case. In the words of Mr. Gladstone, the Union may have the force of law—English law—but it does not rest on a moral basis. How, then (if at all), can moral sanction be given to the connection of the two countries? I shall now try to answer this question.

V

"SENTIMENT," says Mr. Chamberlain, "is, indeed, a great and potent factor in the history of the world; and how splendid is the sentiment which unites men of kindred blood and kindred faith."

"The sentiment of nationality," says Mr. Lecky, "is one of the strongest and most respectable by which human beings are actuated. No other has produced a greater amount of heroism and self-sacrifice, and no other, when it has been seriously outraged, leaves behind it such dangerous discontent."

The Irish question, my Lord, is a question of sentiment—of national sentiment.

"The sentiment of nationality," says Mr. Lecky, "lies at the root of Irish discontent."

"The real root of Irish disaffection," says Mr. Goldwin Smith, "is the want of national institutions, of a national capital, of any objects of national reverence and attachment, and, consequently, of anything deserving to be called national life. The greatness of England is nothing to the Irish. Her history is nothing or worse. The success of Irishmen in London consoles the Irish no more than the success of Italian adventurers in foreign countries (which was very remarkable) consoled the Italian people. The drawing off of Irish talent, in fact, turns to an additional grievance in their mind. Dublin is a modern Tara; a metropolis from which the glory has departed; and the Viceroyalty, though it pleases some of the tradesmen, fails altogether to satisfy the people. 'In Ireland we can make no appeal to patriotism; we can have no patriotic sentiments in our school books, no patriotic emblems in our schools, because in Ireland everything patriotic is rebellious.' These were the words uttered in my hearing, not by a complaining demagogue, but by a desponding statesman."

What Ireland wants, my Lord, is a Government that can "appeal to Irish patriotism"—a Government that can share in the feelings by which

the nation is animated as the page of history is opened revealing the story of the past, from the days when Ireland was a centre of European civilisation, down through the ages when Irishmen, true to ancient memories, ancient traditions, and ancient beliefs, fought for faith and fatherland, triumphing over persecution, surviving wars of extermination, and preserving, amid the calamities of conquest, their race, their religion, and their nationality. If such a Government is inconsistent with the maintenance of the English connection, then the English connection stands condemned. Is such a Government inconsistent with the maintenance of the English connection? That is the problem which statesmen have to solve. Ireland has made her offer. By the voice of O'Connell, by the voice of Parnell, she has expressed her willingness to abide by the principle of the settlement of 1782, a common King and an Irish Parliament, though, as Mr. Parnell said, "No man has a right to put a boundary to the march of a nation." Will England also abide by her pledged word? Will she at length show that treaty obligations are binding on her conscience, and that instincts of honour are not foreign to the councils of an English Minister? Is there no man in England to-day who can redeem the character of his country, and close the most disgraceful chapter in her history by making peace with Ireland?

Peace can be made on the principle of the settlement of 1782, but on no other conditions. The details of the Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893 are swept away. "A clean slate," with the words on the top, "A common King and an Irish Parliament," lies before the English Minister. What will he write on it? An

English politician of Cabinet rank said to me some four or five years ago: "I do not think that there would now be an insurmountable objection to the establishment of an Irish Parliament if it could only be shown how the thing can be done. The crux of the problem is in the exclusion or retention of the Irish members. If they are excluded it will be called 'separation,' and how are they to be retained? What workable machinery can be devised by which their retention will not convey to the English mind the idea that they are not only to legislate for their own country, but that they are to have a voice in English legislation as well." How, my Lord, are these details to be worked out? That is the point. Mr. Gladstone proposed long ago, that the Irish question should not be made a party question; that statesmen of all parties should come together to consider the best means for settling it. Assuredly every sensible Englishman must now be of opinion that this was a wise proposal.

So long as Ireland is made the battle-ground of English parties, so long will the relations between the two countries remain unsatisfactory. Ireland must be treated as a separate national entity, lying outside the circle of English party politics. The question between Ireland and England is a question of international, not of domestic politics. It is a question of bringing into partnership with England a nation which is separated from her by sentiments of race and of religion, and above all by history. The Irish question is not a question of the removal of material grievances; it is a question of the gratification of national aspirations; in a word, of the establishment of institutions which can appeal to Irish patriotism.

An English Parliament never can appeal to Irish patriotism, and if England refuses to re-establish an Irish Parliament (which can so appeal), then the relation between the two countries must remain one of force upon the side of England, and of reluctant submission upon the side of Ireland to the end of the chapter. Is this a relation that appeals to the principles of liberty which we are told Englishmen love?

“The perfected Empire-State of the future,” to quote the words of Mr. Wyndham, with a slight alteration, indicated by capitals, “to evoke universal allegiance must appeal” to (THE) “particular sentiment” (OF EVERY NATION COMPOSING IT).

The particular sentiment of the Irish nation is expressed in the demand for the government of the country by an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive, representing Irish national opinion. It is idle to suppose that if this sentiment, this principle—is once recognised, there can be any insurmountable difficulty in the settlement of details. Let twelve Commissioners appointed by England, and twelve Commissioners appointed by Ireland meet in friendly conference to discuss these details, and all difficulties will soon be brushed aside.

“Is this question above the stature of the right honourable gentleman?” exclaimed Mr. Bright once in the House of Commons, speaking on the Irish land question, and pointing to Mr. Gladstone. . . . It is idle to pretend that the settlement of the details of a measure for the re-establishment of an Irish Parliament is above the stature of modern statesmanship, if Englishmen would only recognise the fact that this measure is necessary to make a lasting peace

between England and Ireland. The Treaty of 1782 pledging England to uphold the Parliamentary institutions which had existed for centuries in Ireland, was made between two nations. It is a sound principle of international law that a treaty made between two nations cannot be revoked or altered without the consent of both. The Union, every one knows, was carried by force and fraud, and is not, therefore, binding on the conscience of the Irish people. If either of the contracting parties desires an alteration in the treaty of 1782, the question must be freely and fairly discussed in a representative conference. It may be that Ireland will not now agree to any alteration in the Treaty of 1782, that she will insist on the repeal of the Union pure and simple, plus the measures of reform which she has since forced through the English Parliament; or it may be that she is still willing to accept the position taken up by Mr. Butt in 1870, and to agree to a federal union with England. In the first case, England is bound by law, as well as in honour, to give way. If she refuses, then the relation between the two countries must remain hostile and irritating. In the second case (that is, if Ireland is willing to consider the advisability of any alteration in the settlement of 1782), the course is, as I have said, a conference between the representatives of both nations. The question for England to consider is whether Ireland is to be a willing or unwilling partner in a common Empire (which shall not be based on the principle of "always holding somebody down," but on the principle of the federation of free nations). . . . Whatever England may do, my Lord, Ireland will not despair. The history of the past fills us with courage and with hope. Every demand

for justice made by Ireland has presented "insurmountable objections" to the English mind.

"Allow Catholics to hold landed property and they will subvert the State," was the cry in 1778. "Give Catholics the Elective Franchise and they will overturn the Constitution," was the cry in 1793. "Admit Catholics to Parliament, and the foundation of our Protestant Empire will crumble to pieces," was the cry in 1829.

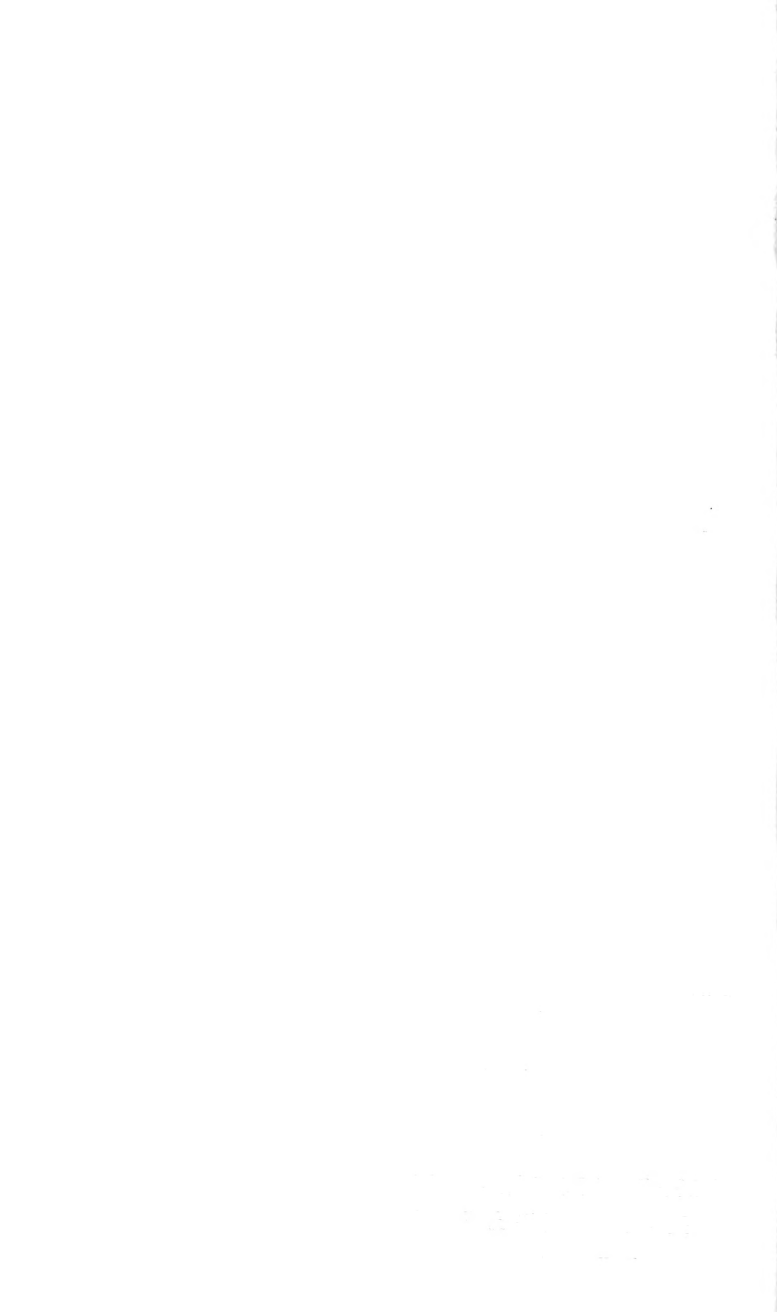
"Disestablishment is sacrilege, land reform spoliation, the enfranchisement of the masses ruin," were the cries of later years. But Ireland triumphed over them all, and she will triumph still. The question, my Lord, is, not whether an Irish Parliament will be re-established or no, but whether it will come in a moment of peace, as a recognition of Irish national rights, or, whether it will come in a time of trouble and turmoil (like the concessions of old), as a tribute to the force of "lawlessness" and "treason."

I am, my Lord,

Faithfully yours,

R. BARRY O'BRIEN.

April, 1905.



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